

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE  
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FOR RELEASE  
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JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION INSTITUTES FORMAL  
PROCEEDINGS CONCERNING JUDGE CHRISTOPHER J. SHELDON

The Commission on Judicial Performance has instituted formal proceedings to inquire into matters concerning Judge Christopher J. Sheldon of the Riverside County Superior Court. The commencement of formal proceedings is not a determination of judicial misconduct. The formal proceedings concern allegations that the judge routinely left the courthouse for the day after his calendar ended in the morning without informing his superiors, without seeking or receiving authorization for these absences, and without making himself available for other judicial work. It is alleged that these actions constitute willful misconduct in office, conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, persistent failure or inability to perform judicial duties, and improper action.

In accordance with the rules that govern Commission proceedings, a hearing will be conducted by Special Masters appointed by the Supreme Court. At the hearing, the parties will have an opportunity to introduce evidence and examine and cross-examine witnesses. Judge Sheldon is represented by attorney Reg A. Vitek, Esq., of Seltzer Caplan McMahon & Vitek in San Diego, California.

Following completion of the hearing, the Special Masters will provide the Commission with a report containing findings with respect to the charges. The parties will have an opportunity to present their views on the report to the Commission through briefing and argument. If the Commission determines that charges are proved by clear and convincing evidence, it is empowered to remove, censure, publicly admonish, or privately discipline the judge. Charges that the Commission determines are not proved will be dismissed. A determination by the Commission to remove, censure, or admonish a judge is subject to discretionary review by the Supreme Court upon petition by the judge.

The Notice of Formal Proceedings is available for public inspection at the Commission office. A copy of the Notice of Formal Proceedings is also posted on the Commission's Web site at [www.cjp.ca.gov](http://www.cjp.ca.gov) (under "Press Releases"). Judge Sheldon's Answer to the Notice is due January 29, 2009. Upon filing, the judge's Answer will be made available for public inspection.

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The Commission is composed of three judges, two lawyers, and six public members. The Chairperson is the Honorable Frederick P. Horn of the Orange County Superior Court in Santa Ana, California.